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Advancement of women

Report of the Working Group on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women*

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I. Activities of the Working Group

1. The Working Group on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was established by the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 56/125 of 19 December 2001. It is composed of 11 members: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic (host country), El Salvador, United States of America, Mongolia, Slovakia, Spain, Uganda and Venezuela.

2. In compliance with its mandate, the Working Group presented a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session containing a series of recommendations aiming at revitalizing and strengthening INSTRAW (A/57/330 and Add.1), which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/175 of 18 December 2002.

3. Furthermore, in paragraph 3 of resolution 57/175 the General Assembly decided to extend the mandate of the Working Group in order to follow up the implementation of the measures referred to in paragraph 2 of the resolution, in close consultation with the Secretary General. By paragraph 8 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Working Group to submit a preliminary report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session, and to submit its final report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

4. In February 2003, the Working Group prepared the preliminary report to the Commission on the Status of Women (A/AC.266/1), in compliance with paragraph 8 of resolution 57/175. That report was presented to the Commission at its forty-

* The tardiness of submission of the present report is due to the fact that the Working Group held its last meeting on 24 October 2003, having received authorization from the General Assembly on 20 October 2003 to hold the meeting during the main part of the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly.

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seventh session. As a result, the Commission adopted decision 47/101, in which it took note of the preliminary report of the Working Group, and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it consider the reports of the Working Group to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/57/330 and Add.1) under the appropriate agenda item at its substantive session of 2003.

5. On behalf of the Working Group and in compliance with its mandate, the President of the Group, the Permanent Representative of Spain, sent a letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council (E/2003/93) transmitting a note with the recommendations of the Working Group.

6. The note specified the proposal of the Working Group to amend the statute of INSTRAW, in accordance with the recommendations made by the Working Group in its first report (see A/57/330, paras. 52, 53 and 55).

7. The note proposed specific amendments to recommendations contained in paragraphs 52 and 53 of A/57/330. Regarding paragraph 55, the Group proposed that any decision in that regard should be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

8. Regarding the appointment of a Director for the Institute, the Working Group has taken steps in compliance with its mandate in order to abide by the recommendation in paragraph 57 (g) of A/57/330 that the Secretary-General appoint a Director to be based at INSTRAW headquarters in the Dominican Republic.

9. That recommendation, along with the others, was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/175. Furthermore, in paragraph 9 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Director, without delay and in consultation with the Working Group.

10. At the time resolution 57/175 was adopted, INSTRAW had an interim Director, Mrs. Savitri Butchev, appointed from 28 October 2002 to 6 January 2003.

11. The Working Group did not receive any information regarding the implementation of resolution 57/175. For that reason, the President, on behalf of the Group, convened a meeting with representatives of the Secretariat. The meeting was held on 10 February 2003 and was attended by the following: the President of the Working Group (the Permanent Representative of Spain); the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic, host country of INSTRAW; the Deputy Secretary-General; the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

12. On 20 February 2003, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women sent a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Spain transmitting a profile to be used in vetting candidates for the post of Director at the D-2 level. On 26 February 2003, the Permanent Representative of Spain sent a proposal for a candidate to the Secretariat. By letter dated 6 March 2003, the Special Adviser acknowledged receipt of the proposal and of the voluntary contribution of US$ 108,400 which Spain had announced on 10 February 2003.

13. During the month of March, no notification was received on the process. For that reason, on 9 April 2003, the Working Group wrote to the Secretary-General for the first time. The Secretariat proposed a six-month contract for the candidate, whose curriculum vitae, in official format, was sent to the Secretariat under cover of a note verbale dated 24 April 2003.

14. On 2 May, the Working Group convened a meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and representatives of the Office of the Controller of the United Nations. During the meeting, the Under-Secretary-General confirmed that the Director's contract would be for a period of six months, renewable for similar periods, and indefinitely, depending on available resources. Likewise, the representatives of the Office of the Controller promised to submit information regarding the financial situation of the Institute in 2002, as well as an estimate for 2003, information that was not received by the Working Group.

15. On 9 May 2003, the Working Group addressed a second letter to the Secretary-General, reiterating the need, mandated by the General Assembly, to appoint a Director for the Institute as soon as possible.

16. On 23 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs sent a letter to the Permanent Representative of Spain, pointing out that, because of her experience with gender issues, the candidate could only be recruited at the D-1 level, although the requirement or observance of the requirement had not been specified in the note verbale dated 20 February from the Special Adviser. It was confirmed that previous Directors had not met that requirement.

17. Similarly, the Group was informed that, on 16 May, the Permanent Representative of Belize, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, had sent a letter to the Secretary-General requesting compliance with the mandate of the General Assembly, reiterating the need to appoint a Director for the Institute as soon as possible and supporting the Spanish candidate.

18. On 30 May, by recommendation of the Working Group, the Government of the Dominican Republic organized a voluntary visit of representatives of the Member States of the Working Group to the headquarters of the Institute in Santo Domingo.

19. On 4 June 2003, the Fifth Committee approved by consensus draft resolution A/C.5/57/L.88 on the financial situation of the Institute, reiterating the mandate to appoint a Director at the D-2 level, and recommended the resolution for adoption by the General Assembly (see A/57/649/Add.2, para. 16, draft resolution II). The Assembly subsequently adopted resolution 57/311.

20. On 25 September, the Working Group received a letter from the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs proposing three candidates: one from the Netherlands and two from Tunisia. The letter asked for the views of the Working Group on the candidates by 1 October 2003.

21. On 30 September, the Working Group sent a letter to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs welcoming the apparent progress in the process of appointing a Director for INSTRAW, as had been requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/175. The Working Group also pointed out the need to have a meeting and request more information about potential candidates from other regional groups.

22. On 3 October, the Working Group met with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and requested additional information on the process of selection of potential candidates.

23. On 8 October, the Working Group was informed that a candidate from Mexico had been added to the list of candidates, and the Working Group requested the

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to consider that candidate along with those included in the final list.

24. During 2003, the Working Group has convened 3 formal meetings and 10 informal meetings. The last formal meeting was held in order to approve the present report on 24 October 2003, once authorization from the General Assembly had been obtained.

II. Status of implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group

25. The following is the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group contained in paragraph 57 of A/57/330:

(a) Linkage with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Article III, paragraph 2 (b) of the Statute of INSTRAW stipulates the participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as an ex officio member of the Executive Board of INSTRAW;

(b) Recommendation "a": On the basis of this recommendation, the Economic and Social Council decided to amend articles III and IV of the Statute in order to transform the Board of Trustees into an Executive Board;

(c) Recommendation "b": The General Assembly allocated the amount of $500,000 from the regular budget of the United Nations in two parts over the course of six months in 2003;

(d) Recommendation "c": The Institute's location remains in the Dominican Republic;

(e) Recommendation "d": In lieu of the Board of Trustees, the Economic and Social Council decided to establish an Executive Board composed of 10 Member States. The Board will have the participation of the Director of the Institute, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, a representative of the host country and representatives of the regional commissions, all as ex officio members;

(f) Recommendation "e": The creation of the post of Deputy Director has been enabled by the changes to the Statute in article IV, paragraph 2 (e). At the same time, article IV, paragraph 2, enables the Director to delegate responsibilities to staff members where appropriate;

(g) Recommendation "f": The Working Group has no information about the creation of this liaison;

(h) Recommendation "g": A Director has not been appointed as at 24 October 2003.